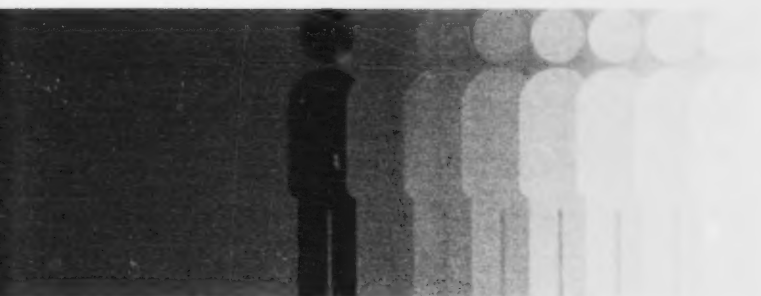


A Framework for Immigration



A Discussion Paper / August 2004

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This document is available on the Internet at <www.gov.ns.ca/immigration>.

Send written comments about the proposed Framework for Immigration
to the following address before October 15, 2004:

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Introduction

Nova Scotia is at a point in its history where the contributions made by immigrants will be critical to our future economic, social, and cultural development. A host of demographic trends—declining birthrate, aging population, out-migration of youth, declining immigration levels—will eventually lead to a smaller population. This will have serious implications for future generations, including lost economic opportunities, competitive disadvantages, declining communities, increasing fiscal pressures, and potential labour market shortages. As one way to reverse these trends, Nova Scotia must actively recruit and welcome people from all over the world and help them use their skills, talents, and experience for their benefit and for the benefit of Nova Scotia.

To this end, the Government of Nova Scotia has adopted the following vision: *Nova Scotia welcomes and embraces immigrants, recognizing the important contributions they make to our social, economic, and cultural fabric. The Government of Nova Scotia will take a lead role in engaging and working with partners to attract, integrate, and retain immigrants.*

Government is not alone in recognizing the importance of immigration for economic, social, and cultural development. Service-providing organizations (SPOs), businesses, regional development authorities, community groups, and religious and ethnic associations have all expressed their support for attracting and retaining more immigrants in Nova Scotia.

Discussions with these groups and within government suggest that

- A policy framework is needed to focus all partners on the same outcomes and strategic direction.
- The Nova Scotia Government could benefit from developing better partnerships with other levels of government and the private sector.
- A single Nova Scotia government point of access for immigration and settlement matters would make interactions more effective.
- More formal consultations with stakeholders and partners are required to formulate the action plan and to engage all partners with implementation.

Attracting more immigrants goes well beyond simply opening our doors. It requires us to do more to help new arrivals integrate and adjust to Nova Scotia

society. It also requires our communities to embrace and adapt to increased diversity.

To advance a shared vision, the Government of Nova Scotia is presenting this framework for your input as we move forward to develop an immigration strategy for Nova Scotia. This framework recognizes the considerable economic, social, and fiscal benefits of immigration and reflects the messages received from business and community stakeholders. It outlines key directions for future immigration policy in Nova Scotia in an effort to set the stage to ensure that a welcoming community awaits new arrivals; to attract more immigrants to this province; to help immigrants integrate into society; and to retain those who decide to make Nova Scotia their home.

The Government of Nova Scotia will be seeking input on this framework through targeted stakeholder consultations in late summer/fall. Citizens are also encouraged to read this discussion paper and make written submissions before October 15, 2004, to the following address:

Ron Heisler
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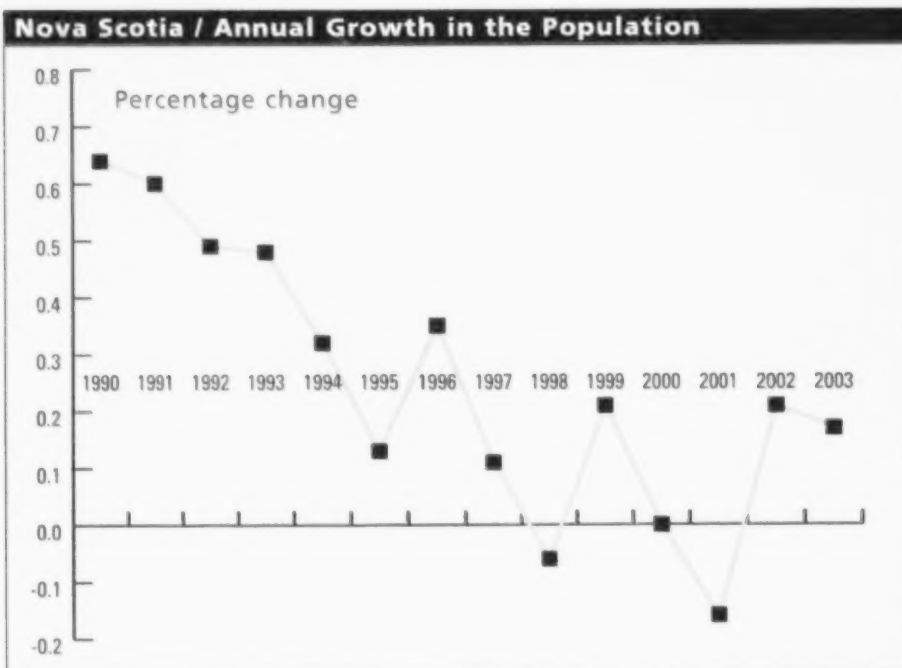
Background: Why We Need Immigrants

Nova Scotia faces a number of demographic and economic challenges, many of which are related to slowing and then zero population growth and an aging population.

Demographic Challenges

Statistics Canada has projected population growth in Nova Scotia of 0.2 per cent until 2016–17, slowing to zero growth in 2023.¹ From 1996 to 2003, total population growth has only been 0.5 per cent, and for two of those years it was negative.

Canadian growth rates have outpaced Nova Scotia's; the province's share of the Canadian population declined from 3.30 per cent in the 1991 Census to 3.03 per cent in the 2001 Census. This province is not alone in experiencing slowing population growth, but is farther along the curve than many other provinces. Statistics Canada has estimated that Canada's population growth will gradually slow to zero in 2041 and decline thereafter.

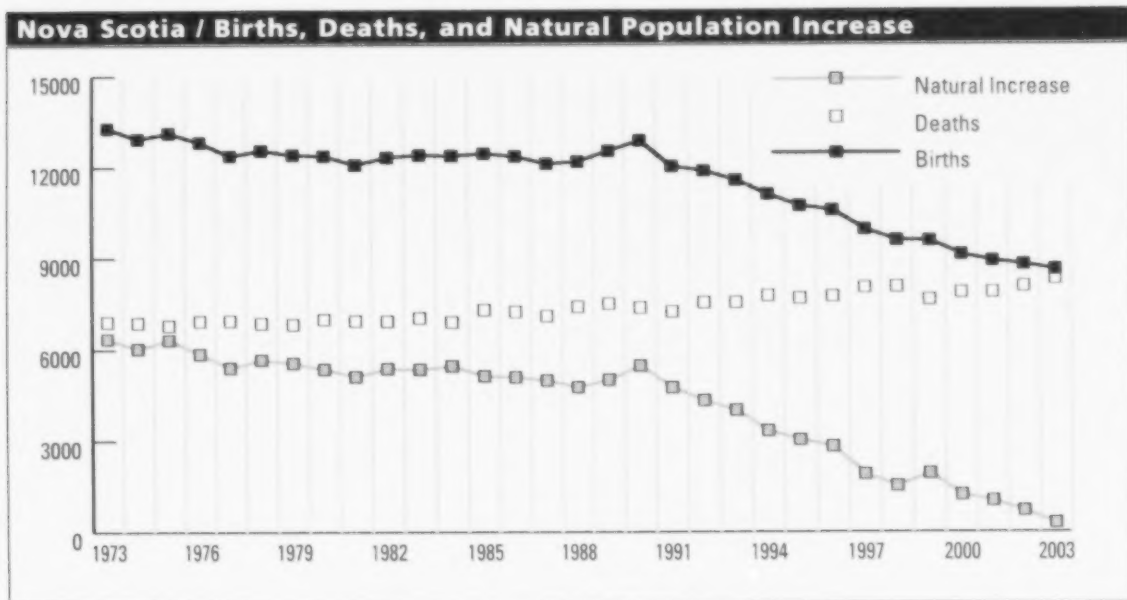


Population

Population growth comes from three sources: natural increase (births minus deaths), net interprovincial migration, and net immigration. In Nova Scotia, all of these sources are in decline.

Declining Rate of Natural Increase

Many jurisdictions, including Nova Scotia, are experiencing lower birthrates. Nova Scotia's rate of natural increase has consistently declined since 1990, and with current projections, it is expected to turn negative by 2006–07.² This means that any population growth after 2006–07 will depend on net immigration (both international and interprovincial).



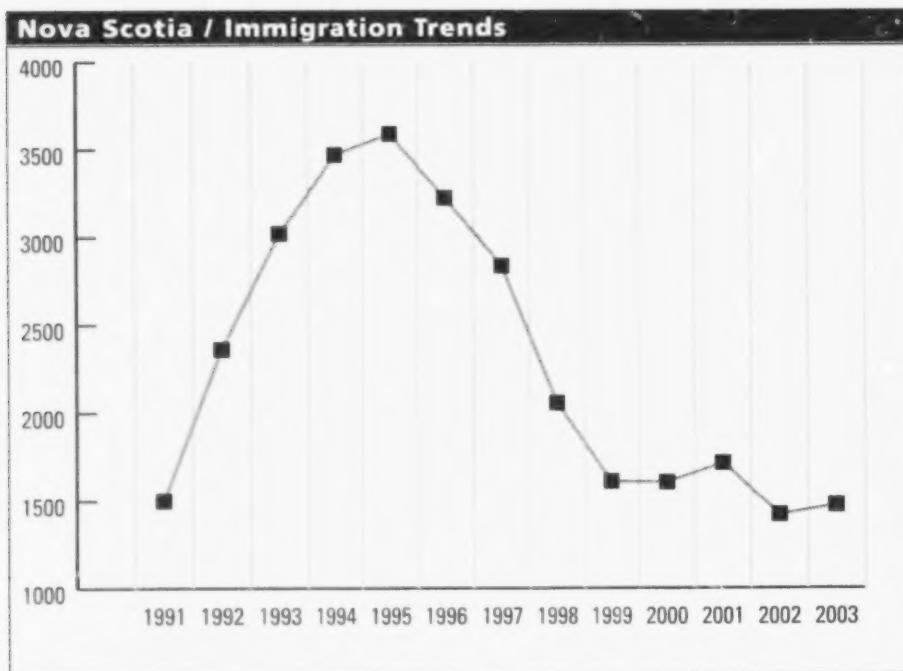
Out-migration of Youth

In terms of net interprovincial migration, Nova Scotia's youth have consistently moved to other Canadian provinces to further their education and/or to find employment. Between 1986 and 2002, there was a consistent annual net loss of 18- to 24-year-olds, and in 13 of those years a net loss of 25- to 44-year-olds. This trend results in a "brain-drain" and loss of people in their

prime working years. While annual net interprovincial migration is volatile, there was a net population loss of approximately 12,500 over the time period from 1985–86 to 2001–02. Statistics Canada projects a declining net population loss until it becomes neutral in 2007–08 and a consistent increase thereafter.

Immigration Trends

In 2003, Nova Scotia attracted only 1,475, or 0.7 per cent, of immigrants to Canada.³ Although immigration increased in the early 1990s to peak in 1995 at 3,589 people (1.7 per cent of Canadian immigration), it has been declining steadily since that time.



Aging Population

Fewer births, youth moving out of the province, retirement-aged individuals moving in, and increasing life expectancy have combined to produce an aging population. Add these factors with the natural aging process of the "baby boomer" generation, and Nova Scotia will see significant growth in the num-

ber of older citizens. In 2001, 13.9 per cent of Nova Scotians were over the age of 65. By 2026, this figure is projected to be 24.5 per cent, with another 14.6 per cent in the 55–64 age group.⁴

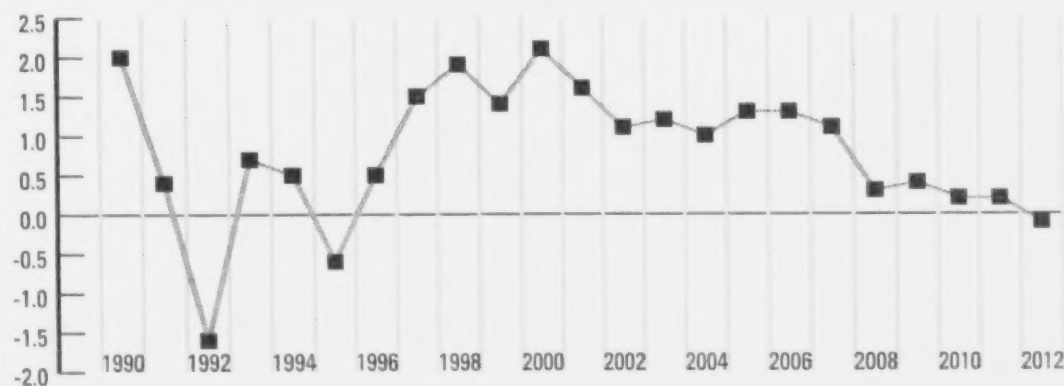
Implications of a Declining Population

Labour Force

Having fewer working-age people will affect our ability to have a competitive, skilled labour force. Based on “optimistic” Statistics Canada population projections, the labour force is expected to decline by the year 2012. As growth falls below zero, the number of people entering the labour force will be lower than the number leaving it. Labour shortages may result if adjustments are not made through adoption of labour-saving technologies (productivity increases) or increases in the labour force.

Labour shortages in some occupations will also be magnified because of current age structures. For instance, in over 20 per cent of Nova Scotia’s occupations half of the labour force is over the age of 45, compared to the labour force average of 34 per cent. Several clusters are of significant concern, including post-secondary professors; P-12 teachers and principals; healthcare professionals; specific construction trades; people providing public safety such as police officers, firefighters, and corrections services workers; and farmers.

Nova Scotia / Labour Force Growth in %



Pressures on the labour force can be eased by pursuing comprehensive work-force participation strategies with groups that are currently under represented in the workforce; by encouraging former Nova Scotians still in the workforce to come home; and by retaining people beyond "retirement age." But these measures, alone, will not solve anticipated problems.

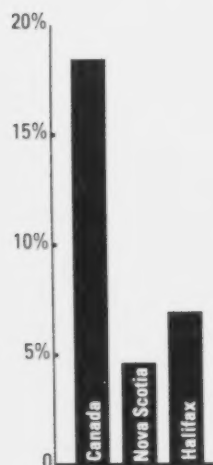
Economic Challenges

Beyond labour force issues, demographic trends also have implications for the economy as a whole. Slowing population growth and an aging population will change both the level and composition of the domestic demand for goods and services such as housing, education, health care, and leisure activities. Equally important is our place in the world. If Nova Scotia wants to grow its economy, it must have the capacity to compete in a global marketplace and keep pace with changing conditions. To compete effectively we need innovative minds, access to capital, and an entrepreneurial attitude.

Fiscal Implications

Demographic trends will also affect the fiscal capacity of government. An aging population will increase the demand for publicly funded services such as health care, putting an upward pressure on expenditures. At the same time, as older populations tend to have less income and spend less money, government's tax revenues will decrease.

Population is a significant factor in the calculation of federal transfer payments, which are another source of provincial revenues. Most recently, the province was obliged to repay \$170 million in equalization payments and \$23 million in Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) received between 2000-01 and 2003-04,⁵ when the 2001 Census reported a decrease in Nova Scotia's population and share of the Canadian population.



Mosaic Index
(Percentage of the
Population that is
Foreign-born)

Immigration: A Critical Part of the Solution

If these demographic trends continue, Nova Scotia will experience lost economic opportunities, competitive disadvantages, declining communities, and ever-increasing fiscal pressures and may experience labour market shortages. One part of the solution is immigration.

There are a number of economic reasons for pursuing immigration, with increases to the labour force being the most significant. Furthermore, recent research by Richard Florida, Professor of Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, points to an area's Mosaic Index (the proportion of the population that is foreign-born) as an indicator of a community's competitiveness. The higher the index, the better it is for competitiveness. Immigrants bring links to other countries that can be used to export goods and services. They bring technical skills, linguistic diversity, international experiences, innovative ideas, as well as capital investment and entrepreneurship skills.

In addition to their economic contributions, immigrants also bring richness to our social, civic, and cultural lives. We only have to look around—at our theatres and concert halls, our art galleries, our council chambers, our places of worship—to understand and appreciate the contributions both recent and past immigrants have brought to Nova Scotia.⁶

A Vision and a Framework for Immigration

Government has previously outlined its commitment to immigration in Nova Scotia's economic development blueprint, *Opportunities for Prosperity* (2000), and the labour force development blueprint, the *Skills Nova Scotia Framework* (2002). Both of these strategies lay out a planned approach to the development of a vibrant and prosperous Nova Scotia. These plans recognize immigration as an important tool to

- facilitate net labour market growth
- build a well-balanced, skilled, knowledgeable workforce
- create global links to economic communities of co-operation
- foster innovative and creative ways of doing business
- encourage a diverse and dynamic cultural fabric

As a much-needed part of the solution, immigration will help provide flexibility and soften the cost of adjustment on Nova Scotia's population. But we have challenges ahead. Immigration numbers have been declining since 1995.

Challenging the Myths

The benefits of increasing immigration to the province will not be realized unless Nova Scotians are welcoming and inclusive and ready to embrace new arrivals to their communities. Becoming an inclusive society includes shedding light on some of the myths associated with immigration and highlighting the benefits immigrants bring.

Consider the following data from the 2001 Census, which shows that, when compared to the general provincial population, immigrants to Nova Scotia have

- lower rates of unemployment
- higher employment income
- higher average income (includes all sources)
- lower percentage of their income from government transfers
- higher education levels
- higher levels of entrepreneurship (and thus are creating jobs for Nova Scotians)

Further research conducted across Canada indicates that

- Immigration creates no permanent unemployment (it does not take jobs away from non-immigrants).¹
- Immigrants use health services less than the Canadian-born population, and in particular, newcomers to Canada have better overall health status and less chronic illness such as cancer and heart disease.²
- Many immigrant and refugee children are doing better emotionally and academically than their Canadian-born peers.³
- Immigrant households in 1990 paid more in taxes than they received in public services (child tax credit, education costs for children, employment insurance benefits, health care costs) and, on average, made a net transfer of public funds to the average Canadian.⁴

1. Economic Council of Canada
3. Statistics Canada

2. Health Canada
4. Backgrounder, Nova Scotia Immigration Partnership Conference

Coupled with the low numbers is a low retention rate. Between 1991 and 2001, for example, Nova Scotia retained only 40 per cent of its immigrants, which is the second lowest retention level among all provinces in Canada.⁷

Clearly, government must be more coordinated and strategic in its approach to attracting, integrating, and retaining immigrants to this province. For Nova Scotia to be an attractive destination, immigrants must have economic opportunities so they can support themselves and their families and they must feel welcome and included in our society.

Immigration in Canada

The Role of Government

It is important to provide the context for immigration policy in Canada. This section outlines the role of each level of government for immigration-related matters.

Under the Canadian Constitution, immigration to Canada is a joint responsibility between the federal and provincial governments, although federal legislation takes precedence.⁸ The law under which all immigration to Canada occurs is the federal Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2002) (IRPA).

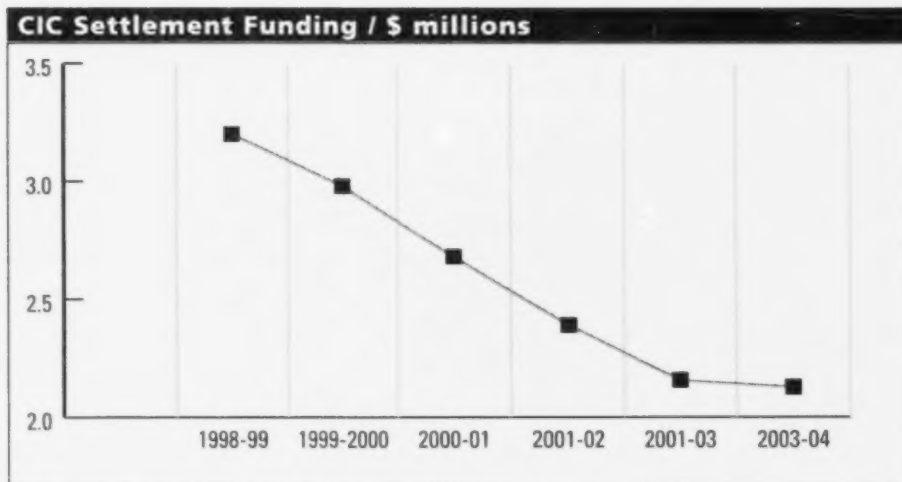
The objectives of the legislation include ensuring the greatest possible social, cultural, and economic benefits of immigration; reuniting families; protecting refugees; integrating immigrants; and managing access to Canada with a fair and effective enforcement strategy. The IRPA establishes the three major categories of immigrants—economic, family, and refugee classes—and imposes requirements for admission in each group. Individuals may also come to Canada as provincial nominees. Regardless of which group is considered, all immigrants must pass applicable federal screening for health, national security, and criminality concerns. (For more information on immigrant categories and requirements, see Appendix A.)

Federal-Provincial Agreements on Immigration

The IRPA expressly commits to co-operation with the provinces in a variety of matters, including agreements with the provinces to coordinate and implement immigration policies and programs.

These agreements, which give provinces discretion in setting their own immigration goals and objectives within federal guidelines, have been used to varying degrees in other provinces. For instance, agreements with Manitoba and British Columbia have transferred responsibility for settlement services from the federal government to those provinces; funds flow directly to them for settlement services, and they have a greater say in planning with service deliverers. Nova Scotia is currently in the process of negotiating a framework agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), which can be tailored to meet the province's immigration goals and objectives.

Traditionally, settlement services have been funded by the federal government, which determines funding levels by applying a formula primarily based on



the numbers of immigrants. In Nova Scotia, federal funding of immigrant services has declined dramatically as a result of the declining numbers of immigrants arriving in Nova Scotia. In recent years, Nova Scotia has supplemented federally funded settlement services through short-term funding for special initiatives.

In addition to framework agreements, the Government of Canada allows provinces to play a more direct role in selecting immigrants who wish to settle in their province through the Provincial Nominee Program. Nova Scotia has such an agreement in place, the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP). There are also opportunities to negotiate memoranda of understanding (MOUs), which give provinces authority to go forward with specific initiatives or projects.

Provincial Governments

Other Jurisdictions

While each province has its own unique situation, it is useful to look at the way that three other provinces—Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan—deliver immigration programs. These provinces, which serve as a good means of comparison for Nova Scotia, have been actively seeking to increase immigration. Each has fared better than Nova Scotia in the percentage of immigrants who have chosen to remain there.

Learning from Other Jurisdictions

Immigrant Retention Rates

Province	No. of Immigrants Destined in 1995	No. of Immigrants Destined in 2001	No. of Immigrants Destined in 2003	Retention Rate (1991–2001)
Manitoba	3605	4601	6492	78%
New Brunswick	646	808	674	62%
Saskatchewan	1947	1703	1671	57%
Nova Scotia	3589	1705	1476	40%

Immigration Resources

Province	Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) and Financial Resources
Manitoba Department of Labour and Immigration (Additional advisors in Industry, Trade and Mines)	43 FTEs \$15 million (including \$5.5 million in federal dollars for settlement services)
New Brunswick Business New Brunswick	9 FTEs Financial resources unavailable
Saskatchewan Department of Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs	10 FTEs \$ 850,000
Nova Scotia	3 FTE s approx. \$555,000

In these provinces, as well as others, immigration matters are coordinated and delivered through one department, although other departments play a role in aspects of program marketing and delivery. All three provinces also operate extensive immigration websites as attraction and integration tools and employ staff who perform marketing, communication, consultation, applicant selection, and strategic functions. While it is difficult to capture the full extent of staff and resources dedicated to immigration in each of these provinces, the chart on the left illustrates human and financial resources in their central immigration departments as of late 2003 and early 2004.

Nova Scotia

In reviewing other jurisdictions and through discussion with stakeholders in the province, one thing became clear: for Nova Scotia to be competitive, government must be more coordinated, properly resourced, and connected to stakeholders to deliver immigration programs and services. Currently, the legislated mandate for immigration in Nova Scotia is shared among three departments—Education; Economic Development; and Tourism, Culture and Heritage—and program delivery is spread among five or six departments that specialize or have expertise in particular areas, including Education, Health, Justice, Community Services, and Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

In response to the advice received by stakeholders through these consultations, the Nova Scotia government will assign a lead department for immigration, and the minister responsible will be sworn in as the Minister for Immigration. Having dedicated resources for immigration coordinated within one department has enabled other provinces to collaborate more effectively with other levels of government, the private sector, and community organizations.

Supporting the Effort

Government is not alone in recognizing the importance of immigration for economic, social, and cultural development. Service-providing organizations, business, labour, regional development authorities, community groups, and religious and ethnic organizations all have a critical role in attracting and retaining immigrants.

Over the past year, conferences, forums, and meetings have been held with representatives from the public, private, and volunteer sectors. Participants in these sessions urged government to take an active role in more aggressively promoting immigration to Nova Scotia and ensuring that appropriate supports are in place to welcome immigrants. These groups also expressed their willingness to work in partnership with government to develop and implement the strategy. (For more information on these consultations and stakeholder groups, please refer to Appendix B.)

The participating organizations have all stressed the importance of immigration for economic and social development, and many valuable recommendations surfacing from these sessions have made their way into this proposed framework. As the process moves forward, government will be asking our partners for specific advice on how to maximize the opportunity immigration provides to this province. The following section outlines some of the major components needed to foster and support increased immigration.

Where We Want to Go

Components of the Framework

Government has identified four components of this immigration framework: welcoming community, attraction, integration, and retention.

Welcoming Community

Immigration is an issue of the heart: people will come and stay only if they can make a good living to provide for their families and if they can make personal contact and build supportive networks in their workplaces and communities. Welcoming immigrants has a specific, local dimension, requiring the support not only of the public, but also of the various groups and organizations that operate within a particular community. Government must provide leadership in encouraging collective acceptance of immigration among Nova Scotians and ensure that a welcoming community awaits new arrivals. Ideas presented in this document focus on increasing awareness about the benefits of immigration and supporting multiculturalism to further develop Nova Scotia as an open and welcoming destination for immigrants to settle.

Attraction

Nova Scotia is faced with a challenge in attracting immigrants because they are more likely to settle in urban centres with well-established immigrant communities and much-needed settlement services. The 2001 Census data confirm that of the 1.8 million immigrants and refugees who arrived in Canada during the 1990s, 73 per cent settled in the Toronto, Vancouver, or Montreal regions.⁹

According to recent Statistics Canada's research, joining friends and family was the top reason (59%) for settling in an area, but reasons varied after that. It is important to note that most (85%) of the recent immigrants planned to work upon arrival, so locations with good employment and business prospects are important.

Government must be proactive in identifying key opportunities for attracting increased numbers of immigrants. Immigrants need to know about the advantages of living in Nova Scotia: safer communities, quality of life, rich culture, excellent post-secondary education institutions, competitive business climate, strong economy, and accessible settlement services. Ideas presented at previous consultations focus on marketing and promoting the advantages of living in Nova Scotia and providing potential immigrants with information on the settlement services available, as well as processes for assessing and recognizing credentials.

Integration

The most critical phase in the immigration process is integration. Looking for accommodation, finding a school, making new friends, finding a job, and learning a new language are all daunting tasks that need to be taken care of upon arrival in a new country. Immigrants need a helping hand to guide them through the process of establishing themselves in their communities. Successful integration depends largely on the quality of settlement services an immigrant receives once he or she arrives. Settlement services are specialized programs geared toward helping immigrants to become full and equal participants in Canadian society. Service-providing organizations (SPOs) receive funding from federal and provincial governments to ensure that the basic integration needs of immigrants and their families are met at this critical point in their lives.

Ideas presented at previous consultations focus on helping immigrants become full participants in Nova Scotia's economic, civic, cultural, and community life with assistance in getting settled into employment, schools and home, and with support for the delivery of a continuum of English as a Second Language programming and employment programs.

Retention

Nova Scotia currently has the second lowest immigrant retention rate in Canada at 40 per cent. The better we are at making Nova Scotia a welcoming community with effective programs and services for immigrants and their families, the more likely they are to stay here.

Retention is the key indicator for the implementation of a successful immigration strategy. All the ideas presented in this framework are aimed at retaining immigrants by fostering a welcoming culture that helps immigrants find work, participate in the social, civic, and cultural activities of the province, and develop pride in becoming Nova Scotians.

Immigrant Target Levels

It is not easy to choose a desired target level for immigration because of the complex interplay of factors, including the amount of time it takes to come to Nova Scotia as an immigrant. However it is clear that Nova Scotia needs to reverse the decline in immigrants and increase the levels of both new and retained immigrants. The table below illustrates how the combination of immigrant arrivals and retention rates would affect the numbers of immigrants actually remaining to address the long-term needs of Nova Scotia.

Proposed Nova Scotia targets for combined classes of immigration are outlined below; they take into account the desire of at least attaining the immigration rate assumed by Statistics Canada's projections for Nova Scotia, as well as anticipated delay between strategic actions and resulting changes in immigration trends:

- 3,600 annual immigrant arrivals within four years of full implementation of the strategy (expected to be April 2006)
- 70 per cent retention rate of immigrants for the 2006–11 Census period.

Immigration Numbers		
Immigrant arrival numbers (scenarios)	Varying retention rates	Immigrants remaining
3,585 (1995 actual peak #)	40%(current estimate)	1434
1,475 (2003 actual level)	40% (current estimate)	590
2,500 (Stats Can assumption)	40%	1000
3,600 (proposed target #)	50%	1800
3600	60%	2160
3600	70% (proposed target rate)	2520

It is important to note that an approved immigration strategy will take time to generate results. From the time an immigrant applies until a positive selection decision is reached can take anywhere from one to four years. This is due in part to the federal government screening process, awaiting information from the applicants themselves, and backlogs in various visa offices abroad. After arriving as a landed immigrant, a person must establish residency in Canada for three years before becoming eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship, a process that takes up to a year to complete. This entire process—from landed immigrant to citizen—can range from five to eight years.

While the outcomes for this effort may not be immediate, actions taken now will help address many of the challenges we face. Government cannot achieve these targets alone. The next section will describe how government intends to work with key partners to implement an immigration strategy.

Engaging Partners

An effective immigration strategy needs strong partnerships and will require the support, endorsement, and active participation of service-providing organizations, business, professional associations, labour, regional development authorities, community groups, religious organizations, multicultural and ethnic associations, and all three levels of government.

Service-providing Organizations

Service-providing organizations (SPOs) are community-based organizations, primarily funded by the federal government. They provide such programs as orientation services, settlement services, outreach/crisis services, Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment (CLBA), translation/interpretation services, employment services, entrepreneur programs such as Immigrant Business Development Services (IBDS), and advocacy. SPOs are close to both the immigrant and the community. Their support and the work that they do are vital to the success of the immigration strategy. Government must work with SPOs to eliminate barriers to successful integration into Nova Scotia society.

Industry and Business

Immigration brings economic benefits to Nova Scotia, but those benefits can be realized only if immigrants can secure appropriate employment or pursue business opportunities. The benefits extend not only to the immigrants but to their employers, their employees, and society overall. Employers stand to gain considerably by hiring skilled immigrants who bring new ideas, innovative approaches, and international contacts.

However, immigrants face significant barriers in trying to find employment when they come here. While many are well-educated and highly qualified professionals, their hard-earned credentials are often not recognized by potential employers. They also lack Canadian work experience, and as a consequence, many work below their qualifications to obtain Canadian references. Statistics Canada research indicates that 6 out of 10 new immigrants who find jobs enter a different occupational field after their arrival. Employers can assist immigrants to obtain relevant Canadian work experience by employing them either as fully qualified staff members or by providing apprenticeship positions.

The public sector is recognizing that the issue of immigration must be seen and heard to be of significant importance to the population of Nova Scotia, in particular the employer community. The need for government to emphasize the importance of immigration, and to generate a plan for dealing with it, has been clearly articulated by private-sector leaders in many settings.

The employer community needs a focus point to articulate their needs and expectations. A model for this can be found in the Manitoba Business Council and in the current efforts of the Nova Knowledge Immigration Committee. To this end, the Government of Nova Scotia will explore the possibility of forming a Council on Immigration, which is independent of government, to be populated by business organization representatives to act as a voice for the community with regard to this important issue.

Industry associations and business organizations, potentially through the Council on Immigration, can play a key role in helping to educate their members on the advantages of employing immigrants at all levels—from high-school co-op students to senior professionals. They can also assist government by spreading the word about foreign recruitment tools, such as the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP). And they can encourage business leaders to mentor immigrant entrepreneurs about skill sets required by different industries as well as assist in finding and retaining employment in particular sectors. They can also benefit from more inclusive and diverse memberships that mirror the social and economic make-up of the province.

Organized Labour

Some unions face the same demographic problems as the province, including an aging workforce, aging membership, and slower population growth, all of which will affect labour's capacity to perform challenging work with world-class skill and efficiency. While not all trades and professions are currently experiencing skill shortages, those unions that are concerned may be open to considering immigration as one tool available to fill gaps. Nationally, the Canadian Labour Congress expressly supports immigration.¹⁰

Government must engage organized labour to explore their specific needs, concerns, and potential opportunities in the area of immigration. They play a key role in educating immigrants about the role of labour unions, identifying key skills shortages, and helping immigrants to integrate into the labour market.

Regional Development Authorities and Community Development Organizations

Regional development authorities (RDAs) lead and coordinate economic development at the local level and represent a partnership between federal, provincial, and municipal governments. RDAs have long realized the importance of a skilled workforce in economic growth and are an important partner in the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP). Many community organizations are pursuing their own immigration strategies, including the Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP), the Colchester Regional Development Authority (CORDA), and NovaKnowledge. RDAs and community groups play an important role in articulating the benefits of immigration in their communities. Government can assist local RDAs and community development organizations with their respective immigration strategies by sharing research and providing an overall provincial policy framework to ensure that partners are focused on the same outcomes and strategic direction.

Organized Religious, Voluntary, and Community Groups

Many religious organizations across Canada have negotiated umbrella agreements with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) that allow for individual churches to sponsor refugees and their families. They play a significant role in the humanitarian aspect of immigration and are essential in ensuring that our immigration efforts are balanced and go beyond simply attracting immigrants for immediate economic purposes. Religious groups and voluntary organizations are also often the ties that bring citizens together. Government will actively engage ecumenical and specific religious organizations in their efforts to embrace immigrants and assist in building cross-cultural awareness within congregations.

Ethnic community groups are also essential to the attraction and integration of new immigrants. The need for community and for rebuilding social support networks are important elements of any immigrant's well-being, and many choose to live where they have friends and relatives. Immigrants often seek out communities that can provide them with programs and services geared toward preservation of the family's culture and language. One reason that immigrants move to other parts of Canada, apart from employment, is because an area lacks established and supportive ethnic communities. If the

community embraces a new arrival and explains different aspects of living in the province, the immigrant will feel more connected and thus more likely to integrate quickly, leading to increased retention.

HOST, a metro area volunteer program, matches recent immigrant arrivals with trained families who act as "hosts" and assist in a speedier integration into the community. The goal of the program is to help immigrants meet the challenges of a new culture and new language. This could serve as a model for other programs outside HRM.

Federal and Municipal Governments

Immigration is a responsibility of both federal and provincial levels of government. The success of any immigration strategy is largely dependent on the level of co-operation between the two levels of government. The province must work with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to determine immigration levels, coordinate funding arrangements, and identify strategic opportunities for regional dispersion of immigrants in Canada. In addition to CIC, other federal departments and agencies that have an active interest in immigration include the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC), Human Resources Skills Development (HRSD), and Canadian Heritage. Working together with our federal partners will ensure that there is no overlap or duplication of immigration efforts and that all partners are working together with the same goals in mind.

Municipal governments are closest to people in communities. They play an important role in engaging citizens about the benefits immigration can bring to Nova Scotia. Halifax Regional Municipality has already expressed interest in attracting immigrants to Metro Halifax. In addition to HRM, government will work with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) to gauge support for the immigration strategy and identify strategic opportunities in other areas of the province.

How We Plan to Get There: Strategic Actions

Immigration is one tool needed to ensure economic, social, and cultural prosperity in the decades ahead. Recognizing the need to act, the government is bringing forward a number of ideas to explore later in this document—all of which will help government achieve its vision. The ideas outlined will

- support a welcoming culture by educating Nova Scotians about the contributions that immigrants make to our future social, cultural, and economic prosperity
- attract immigrants by actively marketing and promoting Nova Scotia as an immigration destination
- integrate immigrants into daily life by providing the settlement services necessary to help them live, work, and learn in Nova Scotia
- retain immigrants by ultimately encouraging them to make Nova Scotia their permanent home

Many of the strategic actions presented below cross over more than one component of our strategic framework. These components include welcoming, attracting, integrating, and retaining immigrants.

Welcoming Community—The Foundation

Embracing Diversity and Immigration

To be truly effective, an immigration strategy must go beyond actions that touch only the immigrant, their employer, and service-providers. An effective strategy is one that recognizes the importance of a welcoming society, while supporting the diversity created through generations of immigrants from different cultures who joined our aboriginal peoples.

The Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage is working in partnership with key stakeholders to help improve the way in which Nova Scotia's cultural diversity is recognized, celebrated, valued, and supported in government policies, programs, and services.

An interdepartmental forum is developing a government-wide multiculturalism policy and strategy in support of the principles outlined in Nova Scotia's Multiculturalism Act. The department will also be working with key stakeholders to establish and support an external advisory council prescribed by Nova Scotia's Multiculturalism Act.

Awareness and Education

A successful immigration strategy needs community consensus and support behind it. However, there may exist concern in some Nova Scotian communities that immigrants take away jobs. Governments at all levels, community leaders, and educators can work to dispel this myth and extend our Nova Scotia hospitality to immigrants. Leaders can play a key role in enacting government policies and developing programs that support immigration, while educators can profile the benefits that immigrants bring to their communities and thoughtfully address policies, programs, and attitudes that have an impact on immigration.

Attraction—Encouraging Immigrants to Come to Nova Scotia

Before welcoming, integrating, and retaining immigrants, it is necessary to attract them in the first place. Nova Scotia's international profile does not match that of Toronto or Vancouver, so we have to work on attracting potential immigrants, explaining the benefits of moving here and how it can be done.

Comprehensive Immigration Website

As a global marketing tool, a comprehensive website provides an opportunity to raise the profile of Nova Scotia as an immigration destination, highlighting the advantages of living here. As an integration tool, a website also provides a single-window access point for immigration information and organizations that assist immigrants to adjust to life in Nova Scotia. This "single-window" concept has been recommended by several SPOs, which have indicated that immigrants need easy, simple, and quick access to information and supports.

Currently, with responsibilities for immigration and multiculturalism residing in several departments, information on immigration to Nova Scotia is not easily visible or accessible via the Internet. Government is committed to making it easier for potential immigrants to access information about Nova Scotia, the options available for immigrating, and the supports available once an immigrant arrives.

Marketing Nova Scotia as an Immigration Destination

Marketing Nova Scotia as an immigration destination cannot be left to a website alone. A number of government departments already participate in international missions to fulfil their departmental mandates, and these missions provide an opportunity to promote Nova Scotia as an immigration destination. Efforts to attract immigrants can also benefit from Brand Nova Scotia, which is a market-focused and partnership-oriented approach to promote Nova Scotia as the best place in Canada in which to live, work, do business, and raise families.

Most provinces market their province and immigration programs through international immigration conferences or fairs. These conferences, although effective, are very expensive to attend due to the cost of travel, booth space, and displays. Traditionally, the Atlantic provinces have maintained individual spaces. Nova Scotia is interested in working with the other Atlantic provinces to create an immigration marketing partnership for Team Canada Immigration Conferences. The premise is that if four provinces pooled resources together they could create a far greater impact, than they could individually. Government will continue to pursue opportunities to work with the other Atlantic provinces to ensure that promotional activities are efficient and effective.

Labour Market Information

Access to reliable information about the Nova Scotia labour market is essential for immigrants. Labour market information can familiarize potential immigrants with what employment opportunities are available and what they need to participate effectively in Nova Scotia's labour market. This information can enhance the effectiveness of programs designed to attract new immigrants and facilitate their integration.

The effectiveness of immigration programs such as the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) also depends on an adequate knowledge of labour market conditions and the tailoring of programming to address occupational and skill requirements. In an environment of declining labour force growth, access to an adequate supply of skilled labour assumes increasing importance. The province, with its partners, is currently engaged in a variety of activities to develop labour market information resources for Nova Scotia, including

development of a guide for the analysis of occupational supply and demand. This guide will enhance our capacity to identify trends in future occupational demand and the assessment of possible future occupational imbalances (surpluses and shortages).

Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP)

The Nova Scotia Nominee Program PNP is designed to help Nova Scotia employers fill critical skill shortages in the workforce. It permits the province to nominate 1,000 skilled immigration candidates over the course of five years—200 candidates and their immediate families each year. Nominees brought in under the agreement will become permanent residents of Canada, who can apply for Canadian citizenship after three years. The Nova Scotia agreement is the first to include clauses related to consulting with the French language community when they discuss immigration issues.

Key characteristics built into the PNP concept are business and community partnerships. If there are employment and business opportunities for new arrivals, they will settle in quickly and be more likely to remain.

The program became fully operational in June 2003, and as of the end of June 2004, six nominees and their families had landed and 65 further certificates have been approved. Taking advantage of the existing momentum will be difficult unless staffing levels increase.

New Opportunities for the NSNP

There may be opportunities to expand the NSNP program in the following areas.

Entrepreneur Stream

The NSNP does not have an entrepreneur stream for those wishing to immigrate to Nova Scotia and establish businesses. A number of models are now being explored to add this as a category. The RDAs will be key in developing this initiative, as opportunities for entrepreneurship will come from the community. Many small business are dealing with succession management issues, and an entrepreneur stream would allow for a wider array of purchase opportunities.

Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) Categories

There are three general streams of applicants for the NSNP.

The **Economic** category supports the growth and development of small businesses in the province. Small businesses receive funds to support their growth plans, and nominees receive orientation to working life in Nova Scotia. In addition to language, age, and education requirements, candidates must have business management experience and be prepared to make a non-refundable contribution, most of which goes into an escrow account for use by an approved small business employer. As part of the program, applicants receive a paid six-month employment contract with a Nova Scotia business. This category is unique to nominee programs in Canada. The Economic stream is in demand because of community presentations and meetings with regional development authorities (RDAs), business, and community economic development organizations.

The **Skilled** category is designed to meet critical labour market skills shortages and is employer-driven. In addition to language, age, and education requirements, candidates must have a guaranteed offer of a permanent full-time job from a Nova Scotian employer in an area where an employer has identified a skill shortage. At present, the NSNP is working with the academic and medical community to bring skilled workers quickly to Nova Scotia. Many of the skilled worker nominees are already working and living in Nova Scotia as temporary workers. The NSNP is in the process of adding a liaison officer to work with business and industry to support the program.

The **Community-identified** stream is offered through RDAs. Every RDA can recommend up to two nominees per year who will add social or economic value to the community. RDAs develop their own criteria based on their business plans and what they want to achieve as a development group.

Temporary Foreign Worker Pilot

Currently, temporary foreign workers may come to Canada to work for specific periods of time with specific employers. HRSD provides certification that there are no qualified Canadians to fill the specific vacancy; however, this is difficult to obtain. Once an employer goes through all the steps to hire a foreign worker on a permanent basis and the worker is processed as an immigrant, they are not obliged to stay or even come to the province as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees Canadian citizens and permanent residents freedom of movement within Canada. This can be frustrating and time-consuming for the employer.

Temporary Foreign Worker Pilot

This is similar to a federal program for Live-in Caregivers, which allows an employer and temporary worker to contract with each other to care for children or the elderly. At the end of the contracted period (two years), the temporary worker is allowed to apply for permanent resident status from within Canada, and they are also released from their obligation to work for that employer. HRSD assesses the initial employer application to ensure that prevailing wages and working conditions are met.

There is an opportunity to negotiate a pilot project with the federal government whereby a person would be issued a temporary work permit that is specific to both an employer and a location in occupations where there are skills shortages. This would allow the employer a period of time to demonstrate to the temporary foreign worker that the province is a good place in which to live and work. The worker is not an immigrant until he or she has completed the agreed period of employment and is then processed to permanent resident status.

Post-secondary International Students

Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions have long been a magnet for international students wishing to study in Canada. Post-secondary students are an attractive source for immigration. They have, to a large extent, integrated into society. They are in the process of obtaining credentials from a Canadian

institution, and they could be part of a well-trained cadre of individuals that could become employed in sectors with impending skills shortages.

Other provinces have negotiated agreements with the federal government that make it easier for international students to gain Canadian work experience and to expedite the processing for landed immigrant status. Nova Scotia recently negotiated a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the federal government that allows post-secondary international students a second year of employment in a field related to their studies and is negotiating another MOU to allow students to work off campus while studying. However, there are no programs in Nova Scotia that target international students for landed immigrant status. Given this untapped potential for increasing immigration numbers, government must explore other avenues for encouraging more international students to stay, live, and work in this province.

The NSNP could be used in conjunction with the joint federal-provincial pilot project on postgraduate employment for international students, which was announced in May 2004. This program allows students to gain an additional year of work experience in their field of study following graduation. Students may be nominated through the NSNP if their employer offers employment with the organization on a permanent basis.

Targeted Immigration and Refugees

In addition to including the immigration message in external missions abroad, there is an opportunity for government to attract groups of immigrants from areas of the world that people are seeking to leave for any number of reasons, especially for personal safety. In the past 50 years, changing world conditions have led to movements of Hungarians, Czechoslovakians, Ugandans, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Chinese, Somalians, and former Yugoslavians, to name a few. Many individuals from these groups have come to Nova Scotia as refugees.

A number of community and religious groups in Nova Scotia have been actively involved in sponsoring refugees and their families. Indeed, many religious organizations have negotiated umbrella agreements with CIC that allow for individual churches to sponsor refugees. Highlighting awareness of sponsorship activities will add another dimension to increase immigration to Nova Scotia.

Federal Immigrant Investor Funds

The federal immigration legislation creates a class of economic immigrants called business investors. As one criterion for admission under this category, an individual must invest \$400,000 into a government fund with no rate of return, which the federal government distributes among participating provinces. Regardless of the destination of the particular immigrant investor, all provinces that opt into this program receive a share of this investment fund. These provinces are required to formally guarantee that the investor is repaid the capital amount within five years. The province can use the funds only for economic development and job creation investments. Five provinces and territories have so far chosen to join this relatively new immigrant investment fund initiative. There are costs to participating provinces, including fees and administrative structures that must be in place to meet federal rules. However, should the benefits exceed costs of participating, Nova Scotia could choose to accept these funds to invest in the economy for job creation purposes. The Province of Nova Scotia is currently evaluating the costs and benefits of opting into this program.

Integration and Retention— Services Available to Immigrants

A successful immigration strategy not only creates the climate for an accepting community, it also ensures that services are available to immigrants so they can quickly integrate and fully participate in the economic, social, cultural, and civic aspects of life in Nova Scotia. Government delivers some programs or services directly, while others are provided by service-providing organizations and community groups.

Access to Provincial Government Services

Immigrants to Nova Scotia often face barriers and challenges when accessing government services. To help address this significant issue, departments throughout government are taking steps to help build cross-cultural competency throughout the public service in order to provide the services needed by members of our diverse populations.

For example, the Department of Health has introduced workshops on diversity and social inclusion and a website that provides links to inclusion issues for health workers. The department is also working to develop guidelines for cul-

turally competent policy and culturally competent care. The Department of Community Services delivers a wide range of social services to Nova Scotians in need.

The Court Services Division of the Department of Justice provides an interpreter in all criminal and family law matters where requested and in civil matters at the order of the court hearing the matter. The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations allows for the inclusion of translators in service interactions. For example, non-English speakers who want a Nova Scotia's Driver's Licence may take an oral knowledge examination with the assistance of a translator.

The Department of Education is also strengthening the diversity of material resources within classrooms, libraries and the public school curriculum.

On a broader scale, all provincial government employees must receive training on diversity in the workplace. And government must continue to address barriers and meet the challenges associated with serving our multicultural community.

Nova Scotia Government as a Major Employer

As one of the largest employers in the province, government can gain significant benefits by hiring skilled immigrants. It can provide immigrants with an opportunity to use their skills and ideas while gaining relevant Canadian work experience, employing them either as fully qualified staff members or by providing bridging/mentorship positions. The public service should mirror the diversity of the people it serves.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

English language training is a priority for newcomers and a major key to successful settlement and integration. To live, work, and raise their families in Nova Scotia, newcomers must be proficient in English. They therefore need access to a full range of ESL education and training opportunities to help them develop the necessary proficiency.

While basic language training, funded by the federal government, is accessible to newcomers, this training is not enough to allow full participation in the social, cultural, civic, and economic aspects of life in Nova Scotia—aspects that may have attracted immigrants here in the first place. In particular,

Funding for ESL

Currently, the federal government supports Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), which provides basic language training for day-to-day living to adult newcomers. Over the last four years, reduced funding for ESL service-providers has had a serious impact on service delivery.

The provincial government supports a number of ESL programs and services, including English in the Workplace, Survival English at Work, and English as a Second Language volunteer tutor programs. The province also funds English for Academic Purposes, which bridges the gap between LINC and the higher level of proficiency required by most universities and community colleges.

The level of ESL programming in public schools is largely determined by regional school boards, and the availability of qualified ESL instructors and resources varies widely. The federal government does not provide any province with funding for ESL in the public school system since public education is a provincial responsibility.

immigrants often face language challenges in their search for appropriate employment, in their pursuit of college/university studies, and in access to their own professions.

The language needs of newcomers beyond basic language training are not being adequately addressed, and the gaps in service, especially with regard to occupation-specific, sector-specific, and employment-specific language training, are limiting employment prospects and opportunities.

One strategy to address this gap is CIC's Enhanced Language Training Initiative (ELTI), which includes funding for higher levels of language training and occupation-specific language training to enable immigrants to find and retain jobs commensurate with their skills levels. The Government of Nova Scotia and Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre have recently partnered on a first-phase research project under ELTI focused on the healthcare sector.

ESL service-providers have called for a holistic approach to ESL, which includes creating a single-window point of access for adult ESL services. They have also stressed the need for a continuum of ESL language training so that newcomers can move beyond basic levels and receive the higher levels of language instruction they need to achieve their employment, family, educational, or community involvement goals. This also includes language training specific to particular needs. It is clear that government must explore options that will lead to a holistic approach to ESL training.

Credential Assessment and Recognition

For many immigrants, secure employment opportunities in their chosen fields are a key motivator when choosing a place to settle. However, many immigrants face barriers to having their qualifications recognized and, in some cases, their professional licensing validated.

To attract skilled workers and trained professionals to fill labour market needs, we must ensure access to a recognized credential assessment service-provider and work with professional bodies, industry associations, employers, and training institutions to ensure acceptance of these credentials once they are assessed.

Currently, the province is leading the development of a partnership among the Atlantic provinces to work with a credential recognition service and promote its services. This will create an awareness of the importance of the assessment and recognition of foreign credentials in the attraction and retention of highly qualified workers.

Ideas to Explore

In this section, government has identified the following “Ideas to Explore” as potential action items that would support this framework. These ideas are not set in stone nor do they represent an exhaustive list. They are presented to encourage discussion and to generate additional suggestions from stakeholders as government undertakes consultation.

Ideas to Explore

Outcomes

Welcoming Community

Embracing Diversity and Immigration

Work to strengthen Nova Scotia's multicultural association network.

Improved access to accurate and up-to-date information on Nova Scotia's many ethnic organizations and others working in support of diversity.

Work with ethnic organizations in their efforts to provide orientation, information, and networking opportunities for new immigrants of similar backgrounds.

Increased capacity to provide orientation services to immigrants.

Develop ethnic community profiles as part of an increased multiculturalism presence on the government's website.

Strengthened multiculturalism presence.

Awareness and Education

Work with teachers, regional school boards, and community organizations to provide training and appropriate resources to raise awareness about the immigrant experience and on immigration and its benefits.

Young Nova Scotians will understand the need and benefits of immigration. Encourage elected officials from all levels of government to speak about the importance of immigrants to Nova Scotia and to attend citizenship ceremonies and multicultural events.

Encourage elected officials from all levels of government to speak about the importance of immigrants to Nova Scotia and to attend citizenship ceremonies and multicultural events.

Leaders in the province support immigration and articulate its benefits to the general public, garnering increased support for the initiative.

Attraction

Comprehensive Government Website

Develop a website in both official languages to market Nova Scotia as an attractive immigration destination.

Immigrants will consider Nova Scotia as a destination when deciding to move to Canada, as an alternative to the larger centres of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver.

Provide information (both provincial and federal) on the options available for immigrating to Nova Scotia.

Immigrants have easy access to programs/options available to them for immigrating to Nova Scotia.

Create a "single-window" portal for immigration settlement services in Nova Scotia, providing immigrants with orientation information and links to immigrant settlement service organizations.

Immigrants have access to the support and information they need to integrate into the economic and social life of Nova Scotia.

Marketing Nova Scotia as an Immigration Destination

Partner with Team Canada Immigration Tours, Nova Scotia Business Inc., Brand Nova Scotia and departments so they include marketing Nova Scotia as an immigration destination in trade and marketing missions.

There is greater awareness of Nova Scotia as a Canadian immigration destination.

Work with partners and monitor international events to identify opportunities for targeted marketing abroad.

There is greater awareness of Nova Scotia as a Canadian immigration destination.

Continue to pursue opportunities to work with the other Atlantic Provinces on joint immigration marketing missions.

There is greater awareness of Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada as a Canadian immigration destination

Expand on preliminary work with the International Student Marketing and Recruitment Committee to support joint missions.

There is greater awareness of Nova Scotia as a Canadian immigration destination, which leads to increased immigration.

Encourage communities of immigrants currently residing in Nova Scotia to use their connections in their countries of origin and promote Nova Scotia as an attractive immigration destination.

There is greater awareness of Nova Scotia as a Canadian immigration destination.

Labour Market Information

Develop a guide to the Nova Scotia labour market for immigrants.

Immigrants and potential immigrants have ready access to the labour market information they need to make informed decisions and to facilitate their participation in the labour market.

Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP)

Reassess and re-profile the NSNP to better support Nova Scotia's skill needs and immigration goals.

Immigration to Nova Scotia increases.

Expand human and technological resources dedicated to this program and explore other administrative options for managing the program.

Target is reached, processing times are maintained, and the capability to increase targets further is strengthened.

Engage francophone groups and communities to meet their needs under the program.

Francophone communities in Nova Scotia are able to benefit from increased immigration to the province.

New Opportunities for the NSNP

Appoint a business officer to develop the entrepreneur stream of the NSNP and expand the provincial capability to market/attract those coming as federal entrepreneurs to settle in Nova Scotia.

Business development means more jobs created/maintained for Nova Scotia.

Negotiate a pilot project with the federal government to attract foreign workers for specific jobs for a specific period of time, eventually leading to immigrant status.

Target qualified post-secondary foreign students in the final years of their studies.

Explore potential for foreign students under the NSNP.

Continue to negotiate agreements with CIC for foreign students.

Shortages will be filled by temporary workers, who will gain immigrant status and stay.

More highly qualified immigrants will stay in the province.

There will be less red tape and faster processing for students as immigrants, who will be more likely to stay in the province.

Enhanced student initiatives will enable universities to attract more foreign students who will be targeted for immigration purposes.

Targeted Immigration and Refugees

Monitor world events and promote the province as a destination for individuals seeking to move from their home country for personal safety reasons.

Partner with CIC to promote opportunities for increasing group sponsorships of refugees.

Work with religious and community groups to disseminate information on opportunities for partnering with CIC on such initiatives.

Meet with organizations and explore their interest in seeking an agreement with CIC for the sponsorship of refugees.

There is greater awareness of Nova Scotia as a Canadian immigration destination for individuals seeking a safe haven.

Immigration is increased.

Immigration is increased.

There is a better response to the needs of newcomers and a balanced approach to recruitment that does not exclude the refugee class.

Federal Immigrant Investor Funds

Consider costs, benefits, and risk data to assess whether to participate in the federal business investor fund available to Nova Scotia.

Economic development and job creation investment would be directly supported by immigrant funds.

Integration and Retention

Access to Provincial Government Services

Improve access to information on public services.

Immigrants know where to turn to access these services.

Build cross-cultural competency among Nova Scotia government employees, including strengthening cultural diversity training for front-line workers who are first points of contact for many immigrants.

Employees are better able to respond to the needs of Nova Scotia's diverse populations.

Work to incorporate principles of diversity and inclusiveness when designing provincial government programs, including seeking out diverse perspectives in public policy processes.

Principles of inclusion are clearly articulated in business plans, policies, guidelines, and procedures; processes are in place to enable meaningful participation of members of Nova Scotia's culturally diverse communities.

Ensure that documents produced government are inclusive and recognize/celebrate diversity.

Immigrants recognize the public service as an environment that supports diversity and inclusivity.

Update and reinforce mandatory diversity training provided to all civil servants.

The public service is a better informed workforce that is able to understand the issues connected to immigration and diverse workplaces.

Nova Scotia Government as a Major Employer

In partnership with the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU), consider engaging in an employment systems review to assess its screening criteria and hiring practices.

As an employer, recognize foreign credentials as assessed by a foreign credential service.

Establish a mentorship program to provide support to immigrants newly hired into the public service.

Expand the current summer employment diversity program to include a separate component that focuses on hiring immigrants.

Work with departments to build diversity councils that can address issues regarding various cultures, customs, etc.

Develop incentive programs/measures to attract immigrants to occupations of need; ensure that job postings are advertised in locations beyond the Public Service Commission website.

Incorporate accountability mechanisms to ensure that principles of affirmative action are considered in hiring practices.

Remove barriers so that qualified immigrants are considered for positions in the Nova Scotia Public Service.

Immigrants' credentials are recognized by the Nova Scotia government as a major employer.

Internal support is given to newly hired immigrants, which can lead to greater retention.

There are more employment opportunities for immigrants, leading to greater retention and creating a more diverse workforce that reflects our population.

There are more culturally sensitive workplaces, which are viewed as welcoming and respectful workplaces for immigrants.

More immigrants are hired, and demands for specific skill sets are met.

Individuals from diverse backgrounds are seriously considered for positions within Nova Scotia Public Service.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Conduct a needs analysis for access to ESL training and create a single point of contact for adult ESL.

Gaps in service are identified, and ESL programs and services are coordinated.

Where appropriate, consider a commitment for multi-year, stable funding that enables ESL providers to plan more effectively.

The sustainability of ESL programs and services is enhanced.

Determine the gaps that exist in the delivery of ESL in public schools and the most appropriate and effective method of addressing those gaps. Provide training and appropriate resources to teachers who must work with students learning English in the classroom.

Immigrant youth will receive ESL training and will integrate more quickly and effectively.

Explore opportunities to partner with the federal government and other organizations to enhance the availability of increased levels of ESL training.

A full range of ESL programs and services is developed.

Work with the Department of Community Services in delivering ESL services to pre-school-aged children.

Immigrant children learn English at an early age—the time at which language acquisition is greatest.

Credential Assessment and Recognition

Implement a partnership with a credential assessment service.

Immigrants' credentials are assessed.

Engage professional bodies, industry associations, employers, and training institutions to examine their policies and procedures regarding the assessment and recognition of qualifications.

Immigrants have their credentials recognized and are able to work in their chosen fields.

Making It Happen

Considering the decline in the numbers of immigrants who chose to come to Nova Scotia coupled with the second-lowest retention rate in the country, government must look at options to more effectively organize its efforts in support of immigration. The sheer importance of immigration to this province requires government to be more "seamless" in its delivery of immigration services, in its distribution of information, and in its partnerships with external organizations.

Government has listened to the advice received from stakeholders. Lead responsibility for immigration will be assigned following stakeholder consultations in the fall. The minister responsible will be sworn in as the Minister of Immigration. Structurally, immigration will have a senior executive director reporting to a Deputy Minister, and it will be resourced. An immigration division will be established with the core functions of policy and coordination; single-window access for all immigration-related inquiries; attraction, integration, and retention programming; and administration of federal-provincial immigration agreements. While some programming will continue to be provided through other departments, the division will provide leadership and coordination for all departments involved in delivering immigration programs and services.

Furthermore, the province must be equipped to compete effectively with those who have the organization and resources to attract and retain a high volume of immigrants already in place. No matter what department is responsible, it is vital that the new division have the capacity to devote and coordinate the right amount and type of resources to

- communicate with potential and actual immigrants, partners, related agencies, and the public
- engage community partnerships
- develop international networks
- support and coordinate integration services such as SPOs
- implement the NSNP
- market Nova Scotia to users of the federal immigration system
- administer intergovernmental agreements
- address planning and accountability for results

External SPOs are key to the successful integration and retention of immigrants. However, funding to SPOs from federal sources has been steadily declining in direct relation to the decline in immigrants, and provincial funding amounts have been unpredictable. These decreases and lack of core established funding have caused some contraction within the service-providing community and have reduced its capacity to provide adequate existing services to current levels of immigrants.

Recognizing this dilemma, the province and CIC have established a Settlement Review Committee to better allocate and coordinate settlement funding. Given the critical importance of SPOs, there is a need to consider multi-year funding agreements that would allow SPOs to plan and build the capacity they need to accept increasing numbers of immigrants each year.

Accountability: Measuring and Reporting on Progress

Once government is organized and all partners are working together to implement strategic actions, we will need to evaluate the results of our efforts. The success of our welcoming community and integration strategies will be reflected in our retention of immigrants. Currently we retain only about 40 per cent of immigrants destined to land in Nova Scotia.

Monitoring our retention rates over time should help determine how successful we are and whether strategies need to change. Knowing why immigrants leave the province and where they go should also help us focus on specific shortcomings.

We can also be more effective if we know where and what we have invested. This will lead to stronger retention results, as we will be able to strategically invest in areas of greatest need.

To help ensure accountability, government will analyse and use data available from Statistics Canada (Census and analysis) and CIC's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants; improve management information systems to accurately track and measure provincial investments in immigration programming and support services; make the best use of available data to track retention rates; and establish targets and accountability measures to determine the effectiveness of the strategy.

Next Steps

The province is presenting this proposed framework to obtain additional input and advice from stakeholders and citizens, and we encourage you to provide your input into the strategy.

Stakeholder meetings are being scheduled to take place late summer/early fall of 2004. A provincial government team will attend the meetings to engage stakeholders and potential partners in the discussion of proposed policy direction, immigration targets, and ideas to explore. The team will also respond to requests for presentations.

In addition to stakeholder consultations, citizens are also encouraged to read this discussion paper and make written submissions, before October 15, 2004, by email at immigration@gov.ns.ca, or by sending them to the following address:

Ron Heisler
Director, Immigration and Settlement Division
Nova Scotia Department of Education
PO Box 578
Halifax, NS B3J 2S9

The results of the consultations and public comments on the discussion paper will be used to prepare a Provincial Immigration Strategy for government's review and approval. It is envisioned that implementation will commence late fall of 2004/early winter 2005.

Appendix A

Immigration Categories in Canada

A permanent resident is a person who has been accepted as an immigrant to Canada and who has arrived in Canada. The phrase "landed immigrant" has a similar meaning. A permanent resident can lose that status if he or she does not comply with certain conditions. Permanent residents have most of the rights enjoyed by Canadian citizens under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, they do not have the right to run for Parliament, vote in a federal election, or hold a Canadian passport.

A permanent resident may apply for Canadian citizenship if he or she has lived in Canada for three years or more, is able to communicate in French or English, knows about Canada, and knows about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Classes of Immigration

Class	Sub-classes	Eligibility Standards under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
Family Class		Canadian citizens or permanent residents may sponsor the following members of the family class living abroad: • Spouses, common-law or conjugal partners, 16 years of age or older • Parents and grandparents • Dependent children, including adopted children • Children under 18 years of age whom you intend to adopt • Children under guardianship (where the province of destination will recognize the guardianship under provincial law) • Brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, or grandchildren who are orphans under age 18 and not married or in a common-law relationship • Any other relative, if the sponsor has no relative as described above, either abroad or in Canada

Refugee Class

Convention refugees are those who:

- have a well founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinions, or membership in a particular social group
 - are outside the country of their nationality and are unable or, by reason of that fear, are unwilling to be protected by that country
 - not having a country of nationality, are outside the country of their former habitual residence and are unable or, by reason of that fear, are unwilling to return to that country
-

Economic Class

Skilled worker

Requires a pass mark of 67 points under federal criteria

Business immigrant

- Investor (invests at least \$400,000, has net worth of \$800,000+)
- Entrepreneur (managerial experience, \$300,000 net worth, sufficient points)
- Self-employed person (applying experience in an athletic or cultural field, or as a farm manager)

Provincial nominee

Nova Scotia Categories

- Skilled worker
- Economic nominee
- Community identified

More information about immigration to Canada can be found on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website, < <http://www.cic.gc.ca/> >.

Appendix B:

Stakeholder Consultations

Over the past year, conferences, forums, and meetings have been held with representatives from the public, private, and volunteer sectors. Participants in these sessions urged government to take an active role in more aggressively promoting immigration to Nova Scotia and ensuring that appropriate supports are in place to welcome immigrants. These groups also expressed their willingness to work in partnership with government to develop and implement the strategy. Some of the consultations held over the past 12 months include the following:

- In April 2003, the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) hosted an immigration forum, which brought together representatives from public, private, and voluntary sectors to identify key policy objectives, to explore the complementary roles of each sector, and to develop recommendations for the attraction, integration, and retention of immigrants.
- On December 8, 2003, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association invited business leaders from Manitoba to share best practices based on their experience with immigration.
- The Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia (MANS) presented *Communities Uniting: An Atlantic Multicultural Conference* in November 2003. The event brought together 230 people representing community organizations, business leaders, educators, researchers, all levels of government, and policy makers from the four Atlantic provinces to discuss themes that focused on multiculturalism, social justice, equality promotion, and immigration to Atlantic Canada.
- On January 22, 2004, the Greater Halifax Partnership hosted a luncheon that featured keynote speaker, Richard Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Florida argues that diversity in society is a key determinant of competitiveness.
- As part of the NovaKnowledge Call to Action Project, a team is working on an immigration strategy, with discussions under way to help guide activity around this issue.

In addition to the conferences noted above, preliminary discussions have also taken place with a number of stakeholders, including

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)
Atlantic Institute of Market Studies
Atlantic Provinces Economic Council
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Colchester Regional Development Authority (CORDA)
Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP)
Enterprise Cape Breton (ECBC)
Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse
Greater Halifax Partnership
Halifax Chamber of Commerce
Halifax Regional Municipality
Industry Canada
Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia
New Dawn Enterprises
NovaKnowledge
Provincial Apprenticeship Board

Endnotes

- 1 Statistics Canada Projections, Medium Growth Scenario based on 1996 Census.
- 2 Statistics Canada Projections, Medium Growth Scenario based on 1996 Census.
- 3 Statistics Canada, Catalog Number 91-002-XPB, "Quarterly Demographic Statistics."
- 4 Statistics Canada Projections, Medium Growth Scenario based on 1996 Census.
- 5 Nova Scotia Department of Finance, 2004.
- 6 One of the other indices that correlates positively with overall competitiveness success is the Bohemian Index, which measures the proportion of the labour force in the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) employed that works in artistic and creative occupations. The 2001 Census shows a higher percentage of total and recent immigrants in the arts, culture, recreation, and sport occupations than the total Nova Scotia population.
- 7 Saskatchewan. Department of Governmental Relations and Aboriginal Affairs. Demographic Trends in Saskatchewan: A Statistical Analysis of Population, Migration, and Immigration, August 2003.
- 8 "In each Province the Legislature may make Laws in relation to Agriculture in the Province, and to Immigration into the Province; and it is hereby declared that the Parliament of Canada may from Time to Time make Laws in relation to Agriculture in all or any of the Provinces, and to Immigration into all or any of the Provinces; and any Law of the Legislature of a Province relative to Agriculture or to Immigration shall have effect in and for the Province as long and as far only as it is not repugnant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada." (S. 95, Constitution Act, 1867, S. 95.)
- 9 Address by the Honourable Denis Coderre (then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) to the Immigration Partnership Conference, Halifax, April 11, 2003.
- 10 Canadian Labour Congress. Statement on Canada's Immigration and Refugee Policies, November 1999.



